

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, March 10, 1892, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. Florence, March 10th, 1892. My dear Alec:

I have just heard of your arrival at Boston in an indirect way, which for some unexplained reason brings you nearer to me than a prompt answer to my cable to you could have done. Obeying your request that I would cable to "Cela Boston tomorrow" I telegraphed you yesterday. In the evening came a note from the director of telegraphs announcing that il Signor Cela being unknown the message could not be delivered. I sent back word that they should ask the Boston office to hold my message until it was called for, and this evening another note came saying that il Sig.Cela had come and taken my message. How wonderful the telegraph is. Think of your taking nearly two weeks to get from here to Boston, and my message to you sent yesterday not only reached Boston first, but I have heard that you hadn't arrived, and now that you have! I wish I knew whether you called for it in person, it would be so nice to know of an act, however, trivial, that you did not two weeks ago, but yesterday, today even. I wish I could give you a local habitation. Are you at the Parker House, and are you going to stay there or where, and who is going to look after you. I wish I hadn't let you go home alone. I can't bear to think of your being at Beinn Bhreagh without me, but alone in Boston is another thing, and when I think of it I think it was outrageous of me to stay. Do please pray be careful of your health.

I went to Dr. Baldwin today, he says Mrs. Burton is better again. But I did not go to him for that reason, but to get him to finish Dr. Goodwin's work and remove the support. I never had a convenient chance before you know, now if I do not feel strong I can keep quiet here, but as yet I feel no ill consequences, and Dr. Baldwin does not think I will.

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What do you think of taking Miss Clark for governess for six months? I have discovered that she would like to come, but fears I would think her too old. Well she is rather older than I want, but she is strong and capable and the children are very fond of her. I wish you would cable me. A young English lady has offered herself, I thought her barely twenty, she says she is 23. She was born and bred here, speaks Italian perfectly and French, and has had the education of her younger sisters on her hands. She is very nice looking, but don't you think it rather a dangerous experiment. Her mother commends her judgement and moral influence. Then there is Augusta's friend in Paris. She knows German, French and Italian and sings beautifully and is aged 30. Miss Clark can teach French. We had our first gleam of spring sunshine this afternoon, and it is much warmer already, which is a comfort after the bitter raw cold of the last week. The children have another Italian teacher now beside Miss Clark, she does not speak any English and takes the children out to walk, so I hope the children are practising what Miss Clark teaches them. The great difficulty is to make them talk, and I am so anxious that they should so I shall not feel that your self-sacrifice in returning alone has been in vain.

I find that La Touraine is the newest and best ship in the French Line, and it sails April 16th, so unless Mamma and Papa come over I will take it. If Mamma comes I propose to stay with her if 3 she has the operation performed, until that is over and she is well, and then leave the children with her and go home to you remaining until you come over for the Genoa Convention. Or if the operation is put off until late in the summer I will return a fortnight after Mamma's arrival, also leaving the children. I want to go home to you April 16th and I have had enough of Europe without you, but I am most anxious that Mamma should have the operation performed either in Paris or London, both because I think there must be the best doctors there and because when she is weak after the operation she will not have far to go to find a recuperating place while in America both Washington and New York are long railway journeys distant from any pleasant, healthful place.

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Always yours, Mabel. I sent my cousins the Gillettes fifty dollars. Augusta said she thought they would be glad of it, one of them is dying of consumption.